

What was World War II?

World War II was a global war that lasted from 1939 to 1945 involving over 30 countries. During the war, two opposing military alliances formed: the Allies and the Axis. World War II launched countries into a state of **total war**, and it became the deadliest conflict in human history with the loss of an estimated 50 to 85 million lives. Mass death was caused by the **Holocaust** and the **atomic bombings at Hiroshima and Nagasaki**.

Watch this [History Channel Video on WWII](#) then answer the questions below about WWII.

Even though World War II began 21 years after the end of World War I, some historians believe that the two wars were part of one vast global conflict. Why do the historians in this clip argue that the wars were connected?

1919-1939

Unresolved Issues of the Treaty of Versailles

Directions: Read the excerpt below and examine the images. Respond to the questions.

The **Treaty of Versailles** was one of the peace treaties at the end of World War I and it officially ended the war between Germany and the Allied Powers. The terms of the Treaty of Versailles were announced in June 1919. Even though German politicians were not consulted about the terms of the Treaty, they had very little choice but to sign it. This resulted in many unresolved issues. Germany and its allies were the losers in World War I and as such were held responsible for all of the destruction and costs. In the Treaty of Versailles, Germany lost territory, was forced to pay huge reparations (payments by a defeated country for the destruction it caused in a war), was forced to take responsibility for the war through the War Guilt clause, and forced to demilitarize or greatly reduce their military. After World War I, Germany suffered from economic problems like inflation and unemployment and Germany was often unable to meet reparation payments. These

problems left many Germans angry at the Treaty of Versailles which they saw as unfair. Germans were bitter and wanted their overseas and European territories back, as well as freedom to operate as they wish.

Check for Understanding:

1. What were the unresolved issues of the Treaty of Versailles?

Synthesis:

2. How could the unresolved issues of the Treaty of Versailles have led to the beginning of World War II in 1939?

American contemporary view of German World War I reparations. Political cartoon 1921.

[Image](#) is courtesy of wikimedia commons and is in the public domain

German troops parade through Warsaw after the invasion of Poland. Warsaw, Poland, September 28-30, 1939. — National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Md.
[Image](#) is courtesy of United States Holocaust Museum

Watch this [Discovery Channel Video on WWII \(0:00-09:00\)](#) then answer the questions below about WWII.

8. How did Hitler justify his attack of Poland?	9. Why did Britain and France declare war on Hitler after the invasion of Poland?	10. What advantages did the German military have?
11. What was Poland's military like?	12. Which other country invaded Poland? Why?	13. After Poland surrendered, what did Germans begin to do to Jewish people?